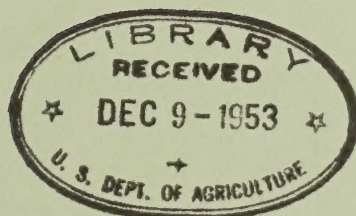


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# *The Hired* **FARM WORKING FORCE OF 1952**

**with Special Information on  
Migratory Workers**



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
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Washington, D. C.  
October 1953

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This report is based on results of a survey made for the Bureau of Agricultural Economics by the Bureau of the Census with comparisons for earlier years from similarly conducted surveys.



# THE HIRED FARM WORKING FORCE OF 1952

## with Special Information on Migratory Workers

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### SUMMARY

In 1952 approximately two million individuals worked for wages on farms in the United States for 25 days or more during the year according to information in a nationwide sample survey.<sup>1/</sup> This number was 8.5 percent fewer than in 1951. Information was also secured on the earnings of these workers and on the employment and earnings during 1952 of migratory farm workers.

Forty-five percent of these farm workers reported that their chief activity during the year was working on farms as hired hands while an additional 11 percent reported that their chief activity during the year was working at nonfarm jobs. Housewives, students and others who were out of the labor force for the greater part of the year made up about a third of the two million people who worked on farms for a month or more during 1952.

Among these farm wage workers males averaged 187 days of work in 1952 and earned in cash wages slightly under \$1,100. These earnings were realized from an average of 152 days employment for pay on farms for which they received about \$800 in cash wages. The remainder of the employment and wages was from work on nonfarm jobs. The overall average for the female farm wage workers was 57 days employment during the year at farm jobs and 10 days at nonfarm jobs with total wage earnings from these farm and nonfarm types of employment averaging \$264. Female workers, however, made up only a fifth of the two million hired farm workers considered in this report.

Length of employment and earnings of farm workers varied depending on whether they were year-round workers or seasonal workers, migratory or nonmigratory. Workers who spent 250 days or more of the year at farm wage work averaged 328 days of work and earned in cash wages \$1,700, practically all of which was from farm employment.

For 1952 the survey estimate of domestic migratory farm workers is about 350,000. This is about 50,000 less than 1950, the most recent year for which comparable information is available. The average annual cash wage income of migratory male farm workers of approximately \$1,100 in 1952 was similar to that of nonmigratory workers. The higher daily earnings at farm work by the migratory group offset the fewer days of employment obtained by them during the year.

The 1952 survey also obtained information on the farthest distance from home that migratory workers traveled in the course of their work. Slightly over half traveled less than 100 miles, a fourth traveled between 100 and 300 miles and 15 percent traveled more than 300 miles.

<sup>1/</sup> The survey was made for the Bureau of Agricultural Economics by the Bureau of the Census in December 1952. Information was obtained for persons 14 years old and over in the civilian noninstitutional population who did farm work for cash wages during the year. Groups not covered in the survey include children under 14 years old, or Mexican nationals who came in without legal authorization, and foreign nationals who were brought in legally for temporary employment on farms who had left the country by the end of the year.



# NUMBERS AND COMPOSITION OF THE 1952 HIRED FARM WORKING FORCE

The number of persons 14 years of age and over who worked for 25 days or more at farm wage work during 1952 was approximately 2 million, a decrease of 8.5 percent below the 1951 total. At this level the number of persons engaged in farm work for a month or more during the year was about the same as in 1945 and 1946 but smaller than in the years since. Males made up practically four-fifths of these farm wage workers and females a fifth, or the same proportions as in 1951 and practically the same as in earlier years (table 1).

Table 1.- Farm wage workers with 25 or more days of farm wage work in the year, by sex, United States, 1945-49, 1951-52 <sup>1/</sup>

Sex	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949	1951	1952
	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands
Total	1,965	1,953	2,215	2,502	2,510	2,156	1,972
Male	1,576	1,584	1,864	2,036	2,001	1,718	1,558
Female	389	369	351	466	509	438	414

## Percentage distribution

	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Male	80	81	84	81	80	80	79
Female	20	19	16	19	20	20	21

<sup>1/</sup> Data relate to persons 14 years of age and over in the civilian noninstitutional population at or near the end of the year.

Of the 2 million workers who did as much as 25 days of farm wage work during 1952, 47 percent worked on farms fewer than 75 days, and 16 percent worked 75 to 150 days. The remaining 37 percent made up the more regular part of the hired farm working force who spent a half year or more in farm wage work during 1952 (table 2).

## CHIEF ACTIVITY OF FARM WAGE WORKERS DURING 1952

Because of the heterogeneity of the hired farm working force, it has been found useful to classify these workers by their chief activity during the year - the type of activity at which they spent the greatest amount of time during the year. Of the 2 million persons who did 25 days or more of farm wage work in 1952, 45 percent reported farm wage work as their chief activity during the year. An additional 10 percent were persons who either operated their own farms or who worked without pay on their family farms the greater part of the year. Nonfarm work was the chief activity of an additional 11 percent. These three groups combined thus accounted for roughly two-thirds of the 1952 hired farm working force. The chief activity of most of the remaining third was either keeping house or going to school. Between 1951 and 1952 the proportion of farm wage workers who were not in the labor force the greater part of the year increased and the proportion of those who were decreased accordingly.



Table 2.- Distribution of farm wage workers with 25 or more days of farm wage work, by length of farm wage work during year, United States, 1945-49, 1951-52 1/

Days of farm wage work	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949	1951	1952
	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands
Total	1,965	1,953	2,215	2,502	2,510	2,156	1,972
Less than 150 days	1,164	1,089	1,182	1,501	1,543	1,304	1,252
150 days and over	801	864	1,033	1,001	967	852	720

Percentage of total

	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Less than 150 days	59	56	53	60	61	60	63
150 days and over	41	44	47	40	39	40	37

1/ See footnote to table 1.

Altogether about 900,000 persons reported farm wage work as their chief activity during 1952, about 200,000 of them having worked at nonfarm work in addition to farm wage work. The number with farm wage work as their chief activity was lower in 1952 than in 1951 and substantially lower than in 1947 and 1949 (table 3).

Table 3.- Distribution of farm wage workers with 25 days or more of farm wage work in the year, by chief activity during year, United States, 1947, 1949, 1951, and 1952

Chief activity of:	Farm wage workers				Percentage of farm wage workers			
workers during year:	1947	1949	1951	1952	1947	1949	1951	1952
	Thou- sands	Thou- sands	Thou- sands	Thou- sands	Per- cent	Per- cent	Per- cent	Per- cent
Total	2,215	2,510	2,156	1,972	100	100	100	100
Farm work	1,563	1,622	1,292	1,078	71	65	60	55
Farm wage work	1,325	1,262	981	884	60	50	46	45
Without nonfarm work	1,014	978	768	674	46	39	36	34
With nonfarm work	311	284	213	210	14	11	10	11
Other farm work	238	360	311	194	11	15	14	10
Nonfarm work	245	252	245	222	11	10	11	11
Not in the labor force	407	636	1,619	1,672	18	25	29	34
Keeping house	128	299	267	288	5	12	13	15
Attending school	195	258	1,287	1,284	9	10	13	14
Other	84	79	65	100	4	3	3	5

1/ Includes for 1951, 8,000 and for 1952, 18,000 persons who reported looking for work was their chief activity. The comparable figures for 1947 and 1949 not available. See also footnote to table 1.



## OTHER CHARACTERISTICS OF FARM WAGE WORKERS IN 1952

The age distribution of the male and female workers who did 25 days or more of farm wage work during 1952 was as follows:

<u>Age</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Total	100	100
14 - 17	17	18
18 - 34	42	37
35 - 64	37	44
65 and over	4	1

Two-thirds of all farm wage workers were white and one-third were nonwhite. Negro workers accounted for all but a small percentage of the nonwhites. Veterans of World War II comprised 12 percent of these workers in 1952. Approximately 60 percent of the 2 million persons in the 1952 farm wage working force were farm residents at the time the survey was made in December 1952; 27 percent lived in rural-nonfarm areas; and the remaining 14 percent were urban residents.

## TIME WORKED AND WAGES EARNED BY FARM WAGE WORKERS IN 1952

Male workers who did as much as 25 days work on farms for pay averaged 152 days of farm wage work in 1952 compared with 165 days in 1951. Female workers with as much as 25 days of paid farm work averaged 57 days employment on farms in 1952 as compared with 70 days in 1951. In addition, male farm wage workers averaged 35 days of nonfarm work for wages in 1952 and female workers averaged 10 days of nonfarm work. The amount of supplementary nonfarm work in 1952 was somewhat higher for males than in 1951, but it was slightly lower for females (table 4).

Because both farm and nonfarm wage rates or average daily earnings were higher in 1952 than in 1951, annual earnings from wages or salaries for all farm wage workers averaged slightly higher than in 1951 despite the decrease in the average number of days of employment. The annual wage income among farm wage workers varied greatly, depending on whether the individuals worked a part of the year, most of the year, or all of the year. Male farm wage workers with 250 days and more of farm wage work received an average annual cash income from wages of \$1,700, all but a small amount of which was from farm wage work (table 5). On the other hand, the 1952 annual earnings of male farm wage workers with 25 to 150 days of farm work averaged about \$700, of which about half was from farm wages and the rest from wages for nonfarm work.

Workers whose chief activity in 1952 was farm wage work averaged about \$1,300 in cash wages earned during the year from a total employment of 244 days, all but 17 of which were spent in farm wage work. These average earnings during the year were 8 percent greater than in 1951 and 44 percent more than in 1949 (table 6).

Average wages earned per day from farm work in 1952 by all workers with 25 days or more of farm wage work was \$5.15. Wages earned at nonfarm work by those



Table 4.- Average time worked and wages earned during year at farm and nonfarm wage work by farm workers with 25 days or more of farm wage work, by sex, United States, 1947, 1949, 1951, and 1952 <sup>1/</sup>

Year and sex	Total days worked	Total wages earned	Farm wage work		Nonfarm wage work	
			Days	Wages earned	Days	Wages earned
	Number	Dollars	Number	Dollars	Number	Dollars
1947						
Total	183	734	156	596	27	138
Male	198	803	170	648	28	155
Female	106	362	85	319	21	43
1949						
Total	166	702	140	557	26	145
Male	183	810	157	643	26	167
Female	98	280	74	219	24	61
1951						
Total	174	879	146	683	28	196
Male	197	1,035	165	797	32	238
Female	84	268	70	238	14	30
1952						
Total	162	908	132	684	30	224
Male	187	1,078	152	804	35	274
Female	67	264	57	232	10	32

<sup>1/</sup> See footnote to table 1.

workers who were employed at both farm and nonfarm jobs averaged \$7.45 per day. Males averaged \$5.30 at farm work and \$7.75 at nonfarm work. Average earnings per day of female workers during 1952 was \$4.05 for farm work and for nonfarm work \$3.15 (table 5). The nonfarm work of many female farm wage workers was domestic service or related activities - types of work in which the wage rates are substantially lower than those of nonfarm work generally done by male farm wage workers.

Distribution of the workers with 25 days or more of farm wage work by their annual cash earnings from farm wages is shown in table 8. As a majority spent less than a half year at farm wage work, relatively few had annual earnings from farm wages of more than \$1,000. Half had earnings of less than \$400, a fourth earned from \$400 to \$1,000, and the remaining fourth earned more than \$1,000. Among male farm wage workers the proportion in the groups with the lowest annual earnings from farm work was smaller than among female workers, but the proportions in the middle and higher earning groups are larger.

Because a substantial proportion of farm wage workers also have nonfarm jobs in the course of the year, a separate distribution is shown of workers by total wage income from farm and nonfarm work (table 9). Thirty-five percent of all the workers had farm and nonfarm wage incomes in 1952 of \$1,000 or more, and 13 percent had incomes of \$2,000 or more.

If attention is focused on male farm wage workers whose chief activity during the year was farm wage work, a marked difference in distribution of workers by



Table 5.- Average time worked and wages earned at farm and nonfarm work for farm wage workers with 25 days or more of farm wage work, by sex of worker and duration of farm wage work, United States, 1952 <sup>1/</sup>

Sex of worker and duration of farm wage work	Number of	Wage work									
		Total					Farm				
		: Average :		: Average :		: Average :		: Average :		: Average :	
		: days of :	: work :	: days of :	: work :	: days of :	: work :	: days of :	: work :	: days of :	: work :
		: Thousands :	: Number :	: Dollars :	: Number :	: Dollars :	: Number :	: Dollars :	: Number :	: Dollars :	: Number :
All farm wage workers	1,972	162	908	5.60	132	684	5.15	30	224	7.45	
25 - 149 days	1,252	93	546	5.90	56	288	5.20	37	258	7.05	
150 - 249 days	296	223	1,306	5.85	190	995	5.20	33	311	9.55	
250 and over	424	328	1,695	5.20	319	1,634	5.15	9	61	7.15	
Male	1,558	187	1,078	5.75	152	804	5.30	35	274	7.75	
25 - 149 days	864	108	690	6.40	59	330	5.60	49	360	7.40	
150 - 249 days	272	225	1,354	6.00	191	1,020	5.35	34	334	9.75	
250 and over	422	328	1,697	5.20	319	1,635	5.15	9	62	7.15	
Female	414	67	264	3.90	57	232	4.05	10	32	3.15	
25 - 149 days	388	59	226	3.85	49	196	4.05	10	30	3.05	
150 - 249 days	24	192	759	3.95	179	701	3.90	13	58	4.50	
250 and over	2	300	1,500	5.00	300	1,500	5.00	-	-	-	

<sup>1/</sup> See footnote to table 1.



Table 6.- Average time worked and wages earned in farm and nonfarm work in 1952, 1951, and 1949 for workers whose chief activity during the year was farm wage work, United States <sup>1/</sup>

Year:	Total	Total	Farm wage work		Nonfarm wage work	
	days	wages	Days	Wages	Days	Wages
	worked	earned	worked	earned	worked	earned
	Number	Dollars	Number	Dollars	Number	Dollars
1952	244	1,331	227	1,188	17	143
1951	249	1,230	236	1,142	13	88
1949	225	925	211	824	14	101

<sup>1/</sup> See footnote to table 1.

Table 7.- Average number of days worked at farm and nonfarm wage work for workers with 25 days or more of farm wage work, by chief activity of worker during year, United States, 1952 <sup>1/</sup>

Chief activity during 1952	Farm and nonfarm wage work		Farm work		Nonfarm work	
	Days	Days	Days	Days	Days	Days
	Days	Days	Days	Days	Days	Days
	Days	Days	Days	Days	Days	Days
Total <sup>2/</sup>	162	132	30			
Farm work	212	197	15			
Farm wage work	244	227	17			
Other farm work	62	56	6			
Nonfarm work	216	57	159			
Not in labor force	64	54	10			
Keeping house	61	53	8			
Attending school	67	55	12			
Other	65	54	11			

<sup>1/</sup> See footnote to table 1.

<sup>2/</sup> Includes a small number of workers who reported looking for work as their chief activity during the year.



Table 8.- Percentage distribution of farm wage workers (with 25 days or more of farm wage work) by cash wages earned at farm wage work during the year, by sex, United States, 1952 <sup>1/</sup>

Cash farm wages earned during 1952		: All workers	: Male	: Female
Dollars		Percent	Percent	Percent
Total		100	100	100
Under 25		-	-	-
25 - 99		10	7	24
100 - 199		20	15	38
200 - 399		20	19	24
400 - 599		11	13	5
600 - 999		15	16	7
1,000 - 1,399		9	11	1
1,400 - 1,999		8	10	1
2,000 and over		7	9	-

<sup>1/</sup> See footnote to table 1.

Table 9.- Percentage distribution of farm wage workers (with 25 days or more of farm wage work) by total cash wages earned at farm and nonfarm wage work, by sex, United States, 1952

Total cash wage income in 1952		: All workers	: Male	: Female
Dollars		Percent	Percent	Percent
Total		100	100	100
Under 25		-	-	-
25 - 99		7	5	18
100 - 199		17	11	38
200 - 399		17	13	28
400 - 599		8	9	5
600 - 999		16	18	7
1,000 - 1,399		11	14	3
1,400 - 1,999		11	14	1
2,000 and over		13	16	-

<sup>1/</sup> See footnote to table 1.

annual income can be seen. In 1952, half of these workers earned a total wage income (from farm and nonfarm work) of \$1,000 or more, and a sixth earned \$2,000 and over. The proportion with \$2,000 and more has increased substantially since 1949 when only 7 percent were in this wage income bracket (table 10).

Wage earnings of workers from farm wage work and nonfarm wage work do not in all cases account for the total income earned during the year. Some of the farm



Table 10.- Percentage distribution of male farm wage workers whose chief activity during year was farm wage work, by total cash wages earned during year, United States, 1949, 1951, and 1952 1/

Total cash wage income in 1952	Total workers			Workers who did:					
				Farm wage work only			Farm and nonfarm wage work		
	1949	1951	1952	1949	1951	1952	1949	1951	1952
Dollars	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Under 25	1	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	-
25 - 99	2	1	2	2	1	3	1	1	-
100 - 199	6	3	5	7	2	6	2	6	-
200 - 399	10	10	8	10	11	9	11	5	5
400 - 599	13	6	10	13	6	12	14	5	-
600 - 999	23	20	22	23	22	20	25	13	29
1,000 - 1,399	24	21	16	25	19	17	22	30	13
1,400 - 1,999	14	21	18	12	22	17	19	18	22
2,000 and over	7	17	19	7	16	16	6	22	31

1/ See footnote to table 1.

wage workers also operate their own farms, and in some instances farm wage workers derive income from other types of self-employment. To obtain a picture of the total annual cash income earned by farm wage workers who depend for a livelihood solely on wages or salaries, a special tabulation was made of the data to exclude those farm wage workers who also had income from self-employment in a farm or non-farm business. The results are shown in table 11, with a breakdown by residence of the worker in December 1952.

Those who did farm wage work averaged only 153 days of employment and earned \$723 in cash wages during the year. Those who did both farm and nonfarm wage work averaged 200 days of employment and \$1,300 of wage income. In the latter case, farm and nonfarm work each provided about 100 days of employment on the average, although the nonfarm work accounted for more than half of the total income. Rural farm and rural nonfarm workers who did farm wage work only averaged about the same amount of employment during the year - approximately 160 days. Workers who lived in urban areas and worked only on farms averaged a little more than 100 days of farm wage work. The amount of nonfarm work done by farm wage workers who were employed both at farm and nonfarm jobs during 1952 averaged 84 days for rural farm residents, 115 days for rural nonfarm, and 104 days for urban residents. Wages earned per day at these nonfarm jobs were highest for urban residents (\$8.10 per day), next highest for rural nonfarm residents (\$7.90 per day), and lowest for farm resident workers (\$6.60 per day). For all of these groups wages per day from nonfarm jobs averaged approximately 40 percent higher than those from their farm jobs.

#### MIGRATORY WORKERS IN THE 1952 HIRED FARM WORKING FORCE

As for certain earlier years, this survey of the 1952 hired farm working force also provides information concerning the number of workers who left their homes temporarily in 1952 to work at cultivating or harvesting crops in a county



Table 11.- Average number of days worked and cash wages earned during 1952 at farm and nonfarm jobs for workers who did 25 days or more of farm wage work and who had no income from self-employment, by residence in December 1952, United States <sup>1/</sup>

Residence and type of work	All wage or salary work			Farm wage work			Nonfarm wage work		
	Average			Average			Average		
	cash wages			cash wages			cash wages		
	Average	Total	Per	Average	Total	Per	Average	Total	Per
	days	1952	day	days	1952	day	days	1952	day
	No.	Dol.	Dol.	No.	Dol.	Dol.	No.	Dol.	Dol.
All residence groups	168	902	5.40	136	664	4.90	32	238	7.55
Farm wage work only	153	723	4.70	153	723	4.70	-	-	-
Farm and nonfarm wage work	200	1,296	6.50	99	535	5.45	101	761	7.55
Rural-farm	167	807	4.85	149	690	4.60	18	117	6.60
Farm wage work only	160	716	4.50	160	716	4.50	-	-	-
Farm and nonfarm wage work	195	1,147	5.90	111	593	5.35	84	554	6.60
Rural-nonfarm	177	1,100	6.20	128	714	5.60	49	386	7.90
Farm wage work only	158	823	5.20	158	823	5.20	-	-	-
Farm and nonfarm wage work	203	1,477	7.30	88	564	6.45	115	913	7.90
Urban	152	876	5.75	102	470	4.60	50	406	8.10
Farm wage work only	106	544	5.15	106	544	5.15	-	-	-
Farm and nonfarm wage work	202	1,228	6.10	98	390	4.00	104	838	8.10

<sup>1/</sup> See footnote to table 1.

or counties other than their home county.<sup>1/</sup> Surveys made in 1949 and 1950 provided an estimate of approximately 400,000 domestic migratory farm workers 14 years of age and over in this country. Because of the difficulty of enumerating migratory workers it was recognized that some underenumeration probably occurred. An allowance for this as well as for children of migratory workers under 14 years of age who also worked in the fields raised the estimate to about one-half million migratory farm workers for 1949 and 1950, exclusive of Mexican nationals who had legally or illegally entered the country for farm work.

For 1952, the survey estimate of domestic migratory farm workers is about 350,000. If an allowance is made for underenumeration and for children of migrants under 14 years of age who worked in the fields during some part of the year, the

<sup>1/</sup> This general definition of migratory farm workers was qualified to exclude (1) workers who commuted daily across a county line to do farm wage work, and (2) persons who made a more or less permanent move to take a steady farm job in another county. Farm wage workers who had no usual place of residence (no regular home, no regular living quarters elsewhere) were considered as migratory if they did farm wage work in two or more counties in 1952.



estimate may be in the neighborhood of 450,000. Distribution of the 1952 migratory farm workers by sex and age groups is shown in tables 12 and 13 with comparisons for 1949 and 1950. These estimates relate to all such workers who did any farm wage work at all during the year. The decrease in the numbers of migratory workers in 1952 compared with earlier years is in line with the downward trend in employment of hired farm workers generally. Further mechanization of agricultural operations along with shifts out of the farm labor force occasioned by expanding opportunities for industrial employment are among the factors that underlie the downward trend in the decrease in size of the hired farm working force.

Table 12.-- Number of persons who did any work as migratory farm workers during the year, by sex, United States, 1949, 1950, and 1952 <sup>1/</sup>

Sex	1949	1950	1952
	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands
Total	422	403	352
Male	291	285	234
Female	131	118	118

<sup>1/</sup> Data relate to persons 14 years of age and over in the civilian noninstitutional population at the time of the survey. For definition of migratory farm workers and coverage of survey see discussion on pages 9 and 10.

Table 13.-- Age distribution of persons who did any work as migratory farm workers during the year, United States, 1949, 1950, and 1952 <sup>1/</sup>

Age group	1949	1950	1952
	Percent	Percent	Percent
All ages	100	100	100
14 - 17	21	21	22
18 - 24	23	31	18
25 - 34	16	18	24
35 - 44	16	14	19
45 - 54	13	10	8
55 - 64	9	3	5
65 and over	2	3	4

<sup>1/</sup> See footnote to table 12.



For purposes of comparing the employment experience and wage incomes of migratory farm workers with those of nonmigratory workers, it may be more useful to look into the data for those workers, migratory and nonmigratory, who did at least 25 days of farm wage work during the year. The attachment to the farm labor force of individuals with less than a month's work during the year in agriculture is often of a marginal or casual nature. Yet their numbers are sufficiently large that averages based on all of the workers, including those with less than 25 days of farm wage work, may not provide useful measures, particularly if the interest is mainly in individuals who occupationally may more properly be considered as agricultural laborers. Moreover, experience has indicated that information obtained about persons who did only a few days or a few weeks of farm work in a whole year varies in completeness from year to year and produces some erratic fluctuations.<sup>2/</sup>

Among workers who had 25 or more days of farm wage work in 1952, the migratory group contained larger proportions of the young workers and those from 25 to 44 than the nonmigratory group, and smaller proportions in the older age groups (table 14). Nearly 40 percent of migratory workers reported farm wage work as their chief activity during the year as compared with 46 percent of nonmigratory workers. On the other hand, the proportion of migratory workers who reported non-farm work as their chief activity was greater than that of nonmigratory workers - 17 percent compared with 10 percent. About 35 percent of migratory and nonmigratory workers reported their chief activity during the year as not in the labor force (table 15).

The proportion of migratory workers was smaller than that of nonmigratory workers among those who had spent the major part of the year in farm wage work. The importance of regular and year-round hired workers in the nonmigratory group, and conversely the concentration of migratory workers in strictly seasonal activities on farms, accounts for this difference. Thus, for example, 40 percent of the nonmigratory workers were employed on farms for 150 days or more during 1952, as compared with only 17 percent of the migratory workers (table 16).

Table 14.- Age distribution of migratory and nonmigratory workers who did 25 days or more of farm wage work during the year, United States, 1952 <sup>1/</sup>

Age group	Migratory	Nonmigratory
Years	workers	workers
	Percent	Percent
All ages	100	100
14 - 17	21	17
18 - 24	17	18
25 - 34	26	23
35 - 44	22	14
45 - 54	9	13
55 - 64	3	12
65 and over	2	3

<sup>1/</sup> See footnote to table 12.

<sup>2/</sup> Of the 352,000 migratory farm workers, all but 64,000 did 25 days or more of farm wage work in 1952. The proportion of workers with less than 25 days of farm wage work was substantially greater among nonmigratory workers than among migratory workers.



Table 15.- Percentage distribution of migratory and nonmigratory workers with 25 days or more of farm wage work in the year, by chief activity during year, United States, 1949 and 1952 <sup>1/</sup>

Chief activity during year	Migratory workers		Nonmigratory workers	
	1949	1952	1949	1952
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
All activities	100	100	100	100
Farm work	48	48	67	56
Farm wage work	38	39	52	46
With nonfarm work	10	12	12	11
Without nonfarm work	28	27	40	35
Other farm work	10	9	15	10
Nonfarm work	13	17	10	10
Nongainful activity <sup>2/</sup>	39	35	23	34

<sup>1/</sup> See footnote to table 12.

<sup>2/</sup> Includes a small number of workers who reported looking for work as their chief activity during the year.

Table 16.- Percentage distribution of migratory and nonmigratory workers with 25 days or more of farm wage work by duration of paid farm work during the year, United States, 1949 and 1952 <sup>1/</sup>

Days of farm wage work	Migratory workers		Nonmigratory workers	
	1949	1952	1949	1952
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
Total	100	100	100	100
25 - 74 days	61	60	38	45
75 - 149 "	20	23	21	15
150 - 249 "	13	10	16	16
250 and over	6	7	25	24

<sup>1/</sup> See footnote to table 12.

During 1952 nearly 3 in 10 migratory workers worked at nonfarm jobs in addition to their farm jobs, compared with only 1 in 5 of the nonmigratory workers (table 15). Nevertheless, the proportion of migratory workers with 150 days or more of total employment (at farm and nonfarm jobs) was only 29 percent compared with 50 percent for the nonmigratory workers. A rather similar situation existed in 1949 (table 17).



Table 17.- Percentage distribution of migratory and nonmigratory workers with 25 days or more of farm wage work by duration of farm and nonfarm work during the year, United States, 1949 and 1952 <sup>1/</sup>

Days of farm and nonfarm work	Migratory workers		Nonmigratory workers	
	1949	1952	1949	1952
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
Total	100	100	100	100
25 - 74 days	40	40	29	34
75 - 149 "	29	31	19	16
150 - 249 "	22	13	23	18
250 and over	9	16	29	32

<sup>1/</sup> See footnote to table 12.

#### TIME WORKED AND WAGES EARNED BY MIGRATORY FARM WORKERS

In 1952 migratory farm workers with 25 days or more farm wage work averaged 124 days of employment during the year and a little less than \$900 in total cash wages earned. These averages included 87 days of farm wage work with annual earnings of \$600 and 37 days of nonfarm work with an average wage income of approximately \$285. Male migratory workers worked longer during the year (144 days) than these averages for both males and females combined. The average cash earnings of male migratory workers in 1952 was \$1,100, compared with the \$884 average for both sexes combined (table 18). Average cash wages earned per day at farm work by migratory workers was substantially greater than those earned per day by nonmigratory workers. Male migratory workers averaged \$7.35 per day worked at farm work, as compared with nonmigratory male farm workers who averaged only \$5.05 - a differential in favor of migratory workers of 46 percent. A similar percentage differential in farm wages per day worked by migratory and nonmigratory workers was also observed in 1949, although the actual wage levels were lower that year. The higher earnings per day of migratory workers is accounted for by the higher rates of pay accompanying peak seasonal activities in harvest or cultivation of crops and also by the prevalence of piece rates in the types of work done by migratory workers.<sup>3/</sup> Hourly earnings of piece rate workers average higher than those customarily paid on a time-rate basis such as per day, per week, or per hour. The higher daily cash farm wage of the migrants also reflects, to some extent, the lower average value of perquisites, or noncash remuneration they receive, compared with that received by nonmigratory farm workers. Average earnings per day for farm work by female workers in 1952, as in 1949, was about the same for migratory as for nonmigratory workers.

Daily earnings of migratory farm workers at nonfarm jobs averaged \$8.15 per day worked - not substantially different from that of nonmigratory male farm workers while employed at nonfarm jobs.

<sup>3/</sup> For a somewhat fuller discussion of the differential between migratory and nonmigratory wages per day, see Ducoff, Louis J. Migratory Farm Workers in 1949. U. S. Dept. Agr. Agr. Inform. Bull. 25. 1950, pp. 11-12.

Table 18.- Average time worked and cash wages earned at farm and nonfarm work by workers with 25 days or more of farm wage work during year, by migratory status and sex of worker, United States, 1949 and 1952 <sup>1/</sup>

Year and category of workers	Wage work								
	Total			Farm			Nonfarm		
	Average:	Cash earned		Average:	Cash earned		Average:	Cash earned	
	days	Total:	Per	days	Total:	Per	days	Total:	Per
	of	for	day	of	for	day	of	for	day
	work	year	worked:	work	year	worked:	work	year	worked:
	No.	Dol.	Dol.	No.	Dol.	Dol.	No.	Dol.	Dol.
1952									
Migratory workers	124	884	7.15	87	600	6.90	37	284	7.75
Male	144	1,101	7.60	99	731	7.35	45	370	8.15
Female	65	259	4.00	53	222	4.20	12	37	3.10
Nonmigratory workers	169	911	5.40	140	698	5.00	29	213	7.40
Male	195	1,074	5.50	161	815	5.05	34	259	7.70
Female	68	265	3.90	58	234	4.00	10	31	3.20
1949									
Migratory workers	119	594	4.95	89	448	5.00	30	146	4.80
Male	135	739	5.50	98	549	5.60	37	190	5.20
Female	82	234	2.85	67	198	2.95	15	36	2.35
Nonmigratory workers	173	719	4.15	148	574	3.85	25	145	5.85
Male	190	818	4.30	165	655	3.95	25	163	6.65
Female	102	291	2.85	76	224	2.95	26	67	2.55

<sup>1/</sup> See footnote to table 12.

As shown in table 18, the average annual cash wage income of migratory male farm workers of approximately \$1,100 in 1952 was similar to that of nonmigratory workers, despite the substantially fewer days of employment of migratory workers. The higher daily earnings at farm work by the migratory group offset the fewer days of employment obtained by them during the year. Nonmigratory workers, however, did not have the job travel expenses of the migratory workers and probably they also received greater value of noncash remuneration in the form of perquisites.

Annual earnings of migratory as well as nonmigratory workers were substantially greater in 1952 than in 1949 owing to higher wage rates received both at farm and nonfarm jobs and to an increase in the amount of supplementary nonfarm employment obtained in 1952. The number of days of farm work obtained in 1952 by migratory workers was about the same in 1952 as in 1949, although it was slightly lower for nonmigratory workers in 1952. The average annual wage income in 1952 for male and female migratory workers combined was \$884, or 49 percent greater than in 1949. These earnings were from both farm and nonfarm jobs and relate to workers who did 25 days or more of farm wage work during the year. For the nonmigratory workers with 25 days or more of farm wage work the 1952 wage income from farm and nonfarm jobs averaged slightly more than \$900, or 27 percent more than in 1949.



## DISTANCE TRAVELED BY MIGRATORY FARM WORKERS

In the 1952 survey a question was carried for the first time as to the farthest distance from home that migratory workers traveled in the course of their work in 1952. Of those migratory workers who worked at farm wage work at least 25 days in the year, 54 percent traveled less than 100 miles, 24 percent traveled between 100 and 300 miles, 15 percent traveled between 300 and 500 miles, and 7 percent traveled 500 miles or more. If account is taken of all migratory workers, including those who did less than 25 days of farm wage work in a year, the distribution of the workers by distance traveled was not greatly altered. The percentage who traveled less than 100 miles increases somewhat, to 59 percent of the total, and the percentage of those who traveled 100 to 300 miles decreases to 19 percent. Those with greater distances of travel constitute about the same proportions as among the workers with 25 days or more farm wage work.

An examination of the duration of employment and earnings of migratory workers in relation to distances traveled shows no particularly consistent pattern except possibly to suggest that those with more than 500 miles of travel may have averaged a longer work year, and therefore greater annual income, than those who traveled shorter distances. The small number of workers in the sample who were in the 500-mile and over group makes it difficult to place too firm an interpretation on the estimates of their average employment and earnings.

## APPENDIX

### Method of Survey

Estimates in this report are based on information obtained for the Bureau of Agricultural Economics by the Bureau of the Census in its regular Current Population Survey in December 1952.<sup>4/</sup> The survey was made on a national sample of approximately 25,000 households. As the estimates are based on a sample, they are subject to sampling variability. The smaller figures as well as the small differences among figures should be used with care. The information on time worked and wages earned during the year is subject to errors in memory of those who reported.

In addition to the regular questions asked each month by the Bureau of the Census, such as those pertaining to personal characteristics and employment status, special questions were asked concerning each person 14 years old and over in the households included in the survey, in both urban and rural areas. (See special questions from schedule.)

Information from these questions provided the basis for this report. The questions in columns 29 and 30 of the schedule permitted the development of special information on migratory farm workers. Instructions given enumerators to aid them in obtaining required information concerning migratory workers are also reproduced.

### Adjustment of 1952 Data

In the 1952 survey, unlike the situation in other years, enumerators were not required to obtain information on wages earned at farm or nonfarm jobs by farm wage workers who did less than 25 days of wage work on farms in 1952. This difference in method apparently led to some inconsistencies between 1952 and earlier years with regard to the proportions working less than 25 days and those working between 25 and 74 days. Specifically, the proportion working less than 25 days was considerably higher in 1952 than in previous years, and the reverse was true for the group working 25 to 74 days. To preserve continuity in the series, the 1952 figures in these class intervals were revised somewhat to make them reasonably consistent with previous years.

A revised estimate of the number of persons working under 25 days in 1952 was derived by applying the average percentage working under 25 days for 1945-51 to the total estimate for 1952. This revised estimate was 358,000 lower than the original reported estimate.<sup>5/</sup> The original figures for groups under 25 days and 25 to 74 days were thus decreased and increased, respectively, by this amount.

It was assumed that the persons switched from the group under 25 days to the 25 to 74 days group were comparable in their population characteristics and as to number of days of work and amounts of wage income in 1952 with persons who reported 25 to 49 days of farm wage work. The 353,000 persons added to the 25 to 74 days group were allotted to the various age, sex, race, and income class groups in the same proportions as persons who had reported 25 to 49 days of farm wage work.

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<sup>4/</sup> Robert Pearl of the Bureau of the Census handled the survey operations and tabulations.

<sup>5/</sup> The actual amount of difference was 353,000, using a percentage derived from data for 1946-51, but this was adjusted upward to 358,000 to lessen the work of distributing these workers among the various population, wage, and other groups.



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NOTE: If 25 days or more in 31, continue with 32 and 33-37 on other side. If less than 25 days in 31, omit remaining items.

NOTE: If 25 days or more in 31, continue with 32 and 33-37 on other side. If less than 25 days in 31, omit remaining items.

If 25 days or more in item 31 on other side



Instructions to Enumerators on Questions in Columns 29 and 30  
Relating to Farm Workers

The following instructions are reproduced from the Bureau of the Census manual of instructions to the enumerators on the special questions added to the schedule for the December 1952 Current Population Surveys.

Item 29 - If "Yes" in 27--Some workers leave home to hoe or harvest crops in some other county. Did ... do this in 1952?

- |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| For whom to ask                   | 1. Ask for all persons who did farm wage work at any time during 1952 ("Yes" in item 27).   |
| Purpose of the question           | 2. The purpose of the question is to get a count of the number of <u>migratory</u> farm wage workers.   |
| What is meant by "hoe or harvest" | 3. The terms "hoe or harvest" are used in the question because these are the principal types of work that migratory laborers do. Cotton chopping, sugar-beet thinning, and ordinary weeding are examples of important types of hoeing work. Harvest work includes not only the cutting or picking of produce, but also loading, unloading, crew supervision, and other types of work incidental to the harvest, when done by migratory farm workers. Thinning fruit, pruning trees and vines are additional examples of work which should be included, provided that these are done by migratory workers in migratory status. Also include work performed by sheep shearers if they did this work in more than one county during 1952. (See paragraph 4 below.) |
| When to mark "Yes"                | 4. Mark the "Yes" oval for a farm wage worker who left his home (definite living quarters, not just a "home State") temporarily to cultivate or harvest crops in some other county or counties with the expectation of returning home. Also mark "Yes" for a person who had no usual place of residence (no regular home, no regular living quarters elsewhere) if he did farm wage work in <u>two or more counties</u> in 1952.  |
| When to mark "No"                 | 5. Mark the "No" oval for a person employed at farm wage work only in the county in which he lived. Mark "No" for a person employed at farm wage work in one county for part of the year, who makes a more or less permanent move to another county during the year and also does farm wage work in the second county. Also mark "No" if a worker only commutes daily across a county line to do farm wage work, and returns home each night.   |
| Where to proceed next             | 6. If "Yes" is marked in 29, proceed to item 30. If "No" or "NA" in 29, skip to item 31.  |

Item 30 - If "Yes" in 29 - How far away from home did ... go to do farm work for cash wages in 1952?

From whom to ask

1. Ask item 30 for all farm wage workers ("Yes" in item 27) who also did farm wage work in some county other than the one where they live ("Yes" in item 29).

Purpose of this question

2. The purpose of this question is to get some idea of the maximum distance migrant workers go from home to do farm wage work or to look for farm wage work. For example, a person may have heard that fruit pickers were needed on a farm 120 miles away from his home, but when he got there found no work available. Then, on his way home he may have found work on a farm 50 miles from his home. In this case, the correct oval to mark would be "100-199".

What is meant by "home"

3. By "home" we mean usual place of residence, consisting of definite living quarters, not just a "home State." For a person who has no usual place of residence (no regular home, no regular living quarters elsewhere) consider the place he is staying at the time of enumeration as his "home" for purposes of this question and ask the question in terms of farthest distance from his present place of residence.

More than one trip

4. If the person made more than one trip away from home to do or look for farm wage work, count the farthest distance from home that he went.

Entries required

5. Mark one of the ovals to indicate the class interval, in terms of miles, which would represent the farthest point from home that the person traveled to do farm wage work. For example, if a man made two trips away from home to do farm wage work, one, 150 miles from home and the other, 60 miles from home, the oval to mark for him would be the one labeled "100-199" since this represents the interval covered by the maximum distance from home he went to do this kind of work.



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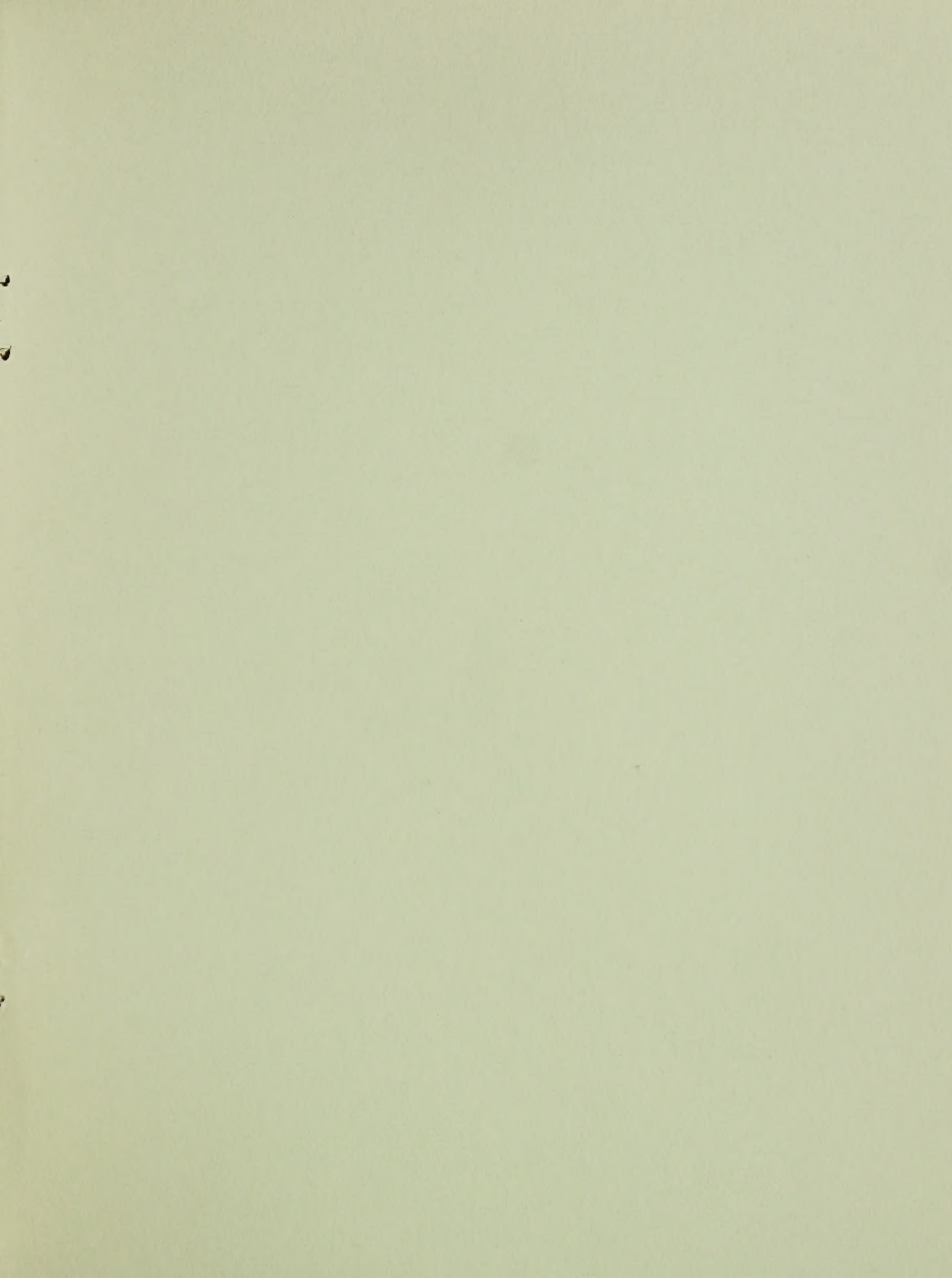
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